

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 25, 2005. Claims 25 to 48 and 58 to 73 are pending in the application, with Claims 1 to 24 having been cancelled and Claims 58 to 73 substituted therefor. Claims 25 to 48 are withdrawn from consideration. Claim 58 is in independent form. Favorable review and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 3 to 8, 10, 12 to 17, 19 to 24 and 49 to 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,500,715 (Ta), which was incorrectly identified in the Office Action as U.S. Patent No. 6,498,656. Although this rejection is believed to be obviated by the cancellation of the rejected claims, Applicants submit that newly-added Claims 58 to 73 are allowable over the art of record for at least the reasons set forth below. Nonetheless, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Newly-added independent Claim 58 is directed to a conflict process rule generation apparatus for generating conflict process rules that define conditions for avoiding a conflict between print options. The apparatus comprises a memory configured to store a principal rule that corresponds to a part of the conflict process rules. The apparatus also comprises an inference engine configured to generate a complementary rule that corresponds to the rest of the conflict process rules based on the principal rule stored in the memory, and to additionally write the complementary rule in the memory.

A feature of the invention of this claim therefore lies in generating a complementary rule based on a principal rule stored in a memory, where the principal rule corresponds to a part of the conflict process rules and the complementary rule corresponds

to the rest of the conflict process rules. By virtue of this feature, since the complementary rule is generated based on the principal rule, it is ordinarily enough for the developer to specify the principal rule and the rest of the conflict process rules are generated automatically.

In particular, although column 1, lines 53 to 58 and column 9, lines 28 to 54 of Ta may be seen to teach that various menu selections/settings are automatically deconflicted, nothing in Ta is seen to disclose or suggest the generation of a complementary rule based on a principal rule stored in memory. In addition, Ta is not seen to disclose or suggest that the principal rule corresponds to a part of the conflict process rules, and that the generated complementary rule corresponds to the rest of the conflict process rules. Moreover, Ta is not seen to suggest the attendant benefits provided by such generation of a complementary rule.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing, newly-added independent Claim 58 is believed to be allowable over the art of record.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claim and are believed to be allowable over the art of record for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

An Information Disclosure Statement accompanies this Preliminary Amendment.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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